



THE POETS' MAGAZINE.

January, 1877.

A SONG FOR THE SINGER.

(WITH THE EDITOR'S NEW YEAR WISHES TO CONTRIBUTORS.)

LAST eve as I sat inditing
Words to woo fortune and fame
I wearied at last of the writing,
And sense of a secret shame
That my thoughts were not grand, undying,
And lavished in words more meet,
And so I arose and sighing,
Went out to the silent street.
The breeze blew fresh from the ocean,
And cast the curls from my brow,
The leaves with a fluttering motion
Dropped dead with each bending bough,
As I wandered on slowly, nor caring
Whither my footsteps might lead ;
With hunger of heart, and despairing
To write what the world might read—
Might read with a blush and a burning
At thought of her whoredoms and wrong,
Might read with her sinful soul yearning
To Christ at the sound of the song.
But lo ! as I wandered benighted,
Loitered in blackness alone,
A gleam from a window lighted
Was over my pathway thrown :
And I paused as a voice came ringing,
Paused in the path that I trod,
To list to a maiden singing
Words which rushed passed me, winging
Their way through the stars to God.

Singer, by the night enshrouded,
 Singing in vain !
 Though Heaven seems ever clouded,
 Wild winds and rain,
 Though in short hours are crowded
 Lifetimes of pain—
 Look upward through your sorrows,
 Look onward to the morrow's
 Garners of grain !
 Look upward ! no retreating,
 Hearts may be blest ;
 Wise words with oft repeating
 Lodge in the breast ;
 Look onward ! time is fleeting—
 Few years at best.
 Faint not, nor think of falling,
 Till thou shalt hear Christ calling,
 "Singer, take rest."

LEONARD LLOYD.

TO THE OLD YEAR.

Unto the unrecorded number
 Of years that quickened, and that slumber,
 Another year Time gathereth,—
 That brought us pain, or peace, or pleasure,
 With labour days and days of leisure,
 And left us loss, or left us treasure,
 But left us nearer death.

Time takes back now into his bosom
 This last shed year, his latest blossom,
 While Earth takes back her flowers and leaves :
 O Time ! will these dead days and hours
 Beget in thee some future flowers,
 As those dead leaves, that fell in showers,
 Make Earth's womb teem with sheaves ?

Shall one clear year's experience nourish
 A germ of wisdom, till it flourish
 In hearts of many men perchance ?
 Or shall four seasons' cheer and sorrow
 Give resignation heart to borrow
 A little hope from some to-morrow,
 And teach joy temperance ?
 Time on heaven's brow can leave no wrinkle
 Carven, nor in the sun's hair sprinkle
 White threads or grey for threads of gold ;
 Nay, for these fade not; even the roses
 Close only when the summer closes ;
 We only fear Time's ceaseless process,
 For we alone grow old.
 Is earth left greener from thy feet,
 O year ? and where thy pinions fleet
 Passed ? is the sea more fair ?
 Shall Autumn flaunt more various gillies ?
 Shall Springtime laugh with bluer lilies,
 Or shine with yellower daffodillies,
 Because thy steps were there ?
 With what new superscription graven,
 Com'st thou now at last to haven,
 O hoary-headed year that diest ?
 What epitaph of mirth or tears
 Amid thy mouldering compeers
 Shall mark, O latest of the years,
 The yew-gloom where thou liest ?
 Amid the flickering shades that hover
 Above the seasons dead and over,
 Hear'st thou these bells that shout to heaven ?
 Nay, though they shake both wall and rafter,
 Where thou art gone they come not after,
 To mock thee with the unwelcome laughter
 That hails young Seventy-seven.
 Him, him salute we at thy leaving—
 Fresh hopes and aspirations weaving,

Instead of garlands, round our brows ;
 But somehow too our love repineth ;
 And as thy last cold sun declineth,
 The unforgetful pansy twineth
 Amid our holly boughs.

F. WYVILLE HOME.

STREWN ASHES.
 BY ALFRED HARBLON.
 THE PRESENT.
 PART II.

I LEAVE the following poems, the dust of my Dead Sea fruit, in the track of The Present. A season that is as an island between two seas, whereof one gleams with the soft light of the Future, and the other is enveloped in the gloom of the Past, a gloom whose sway is alone repelled by the clear rays of the distant sun. Here, in the land intervening, the glamour of the night oppresses me, and with heavy eyes I turn to the brilliance that shall be hereafter :

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Ah ! mihi præteritos referet si Jupiter annos.

It might have been ! And so the long years fly,
 The sleeping summers autumn-stricken die,
 The winters of soft woes and dead desires
 Speed to a spring of fallen funeral fires,
 And springs grow as the autumn lacking green ;
 And yet—it might have been.

It might have been ! And so the long days dawn,
 The deep night findeth yet an earlier morn ;
 The noontide hears the morning's latest laugh ;
 And rises from the river cenotaph,
 And evenings are as morrows, dark and keen ;
 And yet—it might have been.

It might have been ! The sun shines on the plain,
 The spring-tide flowers bloom and fall again,
 Fall with the noontide and the noontide glow,
 The grieving winds and gusts of winter snow
 Wait for a time and season unforeseen ;
 And yet—it might have been.

It might have been ! No hope can ever be
 To wrest lost life from out the sovereign sea,

To gather from the seething leagues of sand
 Light golden grains once fallen from the hand,
 To reap the raylets of the sunset sheen ;

And yet—it might have been.

It might have been ! The corn of fairest ear
 Grows grey and withered ere the sheaves adhere ;
 The fruit, that on the branch was fair and full,
 The flower that budded, ere the hand could cull,
 Fell to the ground beneath a sky serene ;

And yet—it might have been.

It might have been ! Yet who can know or say
 What morrow now shall follow on the day ?
 Sick sorrow follows to a morn of joy,
 And hottest hope eves in a poor alloy :
 This hidden morrow who hath known or seen ?

And yet—it might have been.

It might have been ! If but the years reverse,
 The present lift the dead past's lightest curse,
 The future be the past, and so again
 That we repeat our happiness or pain,
 Then, and then only, can we tear from teen ;

It might—it might have been.

It might have been ! Could but the days recall
 Long summer hours more glorious in their fall,
 Could but recall thee, O my love, to me,
 Wake thee to wander by the singing sea,
 O love, O love, for this alone I ween ;
 I dream—it might have been.

(*To be Continued.*)

OLD LOVES.

LOVES I have loved ! Ah ! many an one
 Comes to me now, thro' the mist of the years ;
 Eyes overflowing with girlhood's fun
 Dower mine own with unbidden tears.

As thoughts come, swallow-like, over the main
 Of the past, silver-wing'd, aneath Memory's moon,
 Warm hand-linkings, lip-pressings thrill me again
 From loves won lightly—forgotten as soon.

For hot youth's love is a mad, March day,
 Or a changing stream, where the willow-leaf dips ;
 And the dear, absent, dark-eyes *will* winnow away
 When golden tresses flow warm to the lips.

Lo, Minnie I see in the shadows arise—
 Minnie, all meek as a prayerful saint,
 With heavenly gleams in the deeps of her eyes
 Might a Dantè sing, or a Raphael paint.

Agatha, pretty, and pouting, and pert,
 Who worked my slippers and smoking cap ;
 She, who was then such a terrible flirt,
 Lives, and will die, an old maid, mayhap.

Fair Eveline, too, that I boated with
 On the laughing lake with the fairy billows ;
 A dreamy syren, a beautiful myth,
 Who read me Tennyson under the willows.

And Blanche, that I sketched with years ago,
 In that ruined aisle by the Western foam ;
 Over her bosom the snowdrops grow—
 Gone, sweet soul, to her long, long home.

Kate, with the air of a Queen, so tall—
 Maude, with a cheek like the dawn of day—
 And Nell, that I then loved best of them all,
 Nellie, poor girl, who went astray.

All these, and more, 'till my last sweet love
 Grew part of my life—my latest, my best,—
 She is close to me now, like a frail white dove,
 Pillows her head on my heaving breast ;

With her beautiful eyes upturned to mine,
 Wondering, wee little wife, no doubt,
 What visions I have in the red fireshine,
 What I've been dreaming so long about !

ALFRED THOMPSON.

THE MUSCOVITE DOVE.

WHY frettest thou so? art thou eager, poor dove,
To display to the nations thy symbol of love?
So galling to thee is the bondage of rest,
That it stirs e'en the plumage on that snowy breast?
Can it be, that thou sorely bemoanest the fate
That's o'er taken thy hapless Belgradian mate?
Thou art weary and worn with thy vain fluttering—
'Tis the *wires* that are wounding thee, ruffling thy wing!
No—I may not uncage thee, and give thee release—
They would pluck from thy mouth the green emblem of peace,
The signal that bids war's diplomacy cease.
Loud and fierce is the war-cry that drowns thy sweet lay;
Yes, a nation that boasts thy Imperial sway,
Hath unfurled her proud banners to roll back the fray.
Insatiate Ambition, which broods o'er the East,
Like a ravenous vulture, far scenting the feast,
Is darkening the land with her gathering host,
And spreading her wings to the coveted coast.
Too fondly has fancy then reared thy soft nest,
In a land that may offer the grave for thy rest?
Thou liftest thy wing—ah! I know, thou wouldst hie
Where the minarets sparkle, that court the blue sky—
Where dance the blue waves 'neath a sunnier shore,
That owns the dark rule of Mahometan lore.
Let no rashness ensnare thee! Diplomacy's net
Is but masking its toils—thou beholdest not yet
The cloud that o'er shadows that perilous sea—
Nor the wings the far eagle is spreading for thee!
Poor Dove! thou art scorning the treacherous snare,
Where the warrior watchers no vigilance spare;
Death's missiles are hurtling—and fierce is the foe,
That has doomed a fair land to disaster and woe;
Swift, I know, is thy wing—aye, but swifter the fate
Thou may'st not avert from thy perishing mate!

REV. F. PHILLOTT.

FATHER CHRISTMAS.

FATHER CHRISTMAS, roused from slumber,

After twelve months quiet rest,

Found of cards and notes good number,

All of which kind thoughts express'd ;

Children sent their infant greetings,

Old men welcom'd him once more,

Wealth required him at its meetings,

Poverty threw wide the door.

Unto all, he answered kindly,

“ Whatsoe'er your rank or state,

Though ye walk in folly blindly,

Or in wisdom are elate ;

Though ye crouch in humblest corner,

Or preside in regal hall,

Christmas of no state a scorner

Wishes well to one and all.”

“ And I think,” quoth Christmas gaily,

“ Times are better now, than when

Untaught children passed me daily,

Babes in years—in vices, Men ;

Curses, infant lips would mutter ;

No one taught their squalid youth ;

Now they're rescued from the gutter,

They may learn and love the truth.”

“ Years have pass'd, yet I remember,

Words I often love to quote ;

Words that warm'd my chill December ;

Words that one who loved me wrote—

He is gone, but ne'er shall perish

Books where pathos blends with whim ;

Long will Father Christmas cherish,

Loving thoughts of Tiny Tim.”

“ And I know, whilst bending lowly,

I am named from Him who rose

Man in form, but mighty—Holy ;

Conqueror of human woes.

Whilst no trials could subdue him,
Yet with favor he could see
Children pressing round to view Him—
“Suffer them to come to me.”

“Lead them on ye wise and gifted,
Let them see their Saviour’s face ;
Let your voices be uplifted,
Crime and error to displace.
Though your views perchance may vary,
Yet will ye agree in this,
He—Redeemer—born of Mary,
Can alone conduct to bliss.

“But whilst teaching, let the teacher
Something learn, ’tis well to know ;
Earnest art thou gifted preacher,
Warning men to shun their foe ;
But look inward—there may nestle
In thy heart contempt or pride ;
With the tempter boldly wrestle,
Cast the evil thought aside.

“Ask thyself when warning sinners,
How far thou art free from sin ;
At the losers mock the winners,
Though by chance, not skill, they win.
With yourself, too well contented,
Oft the fallen you deride ;
Knowing not what is repented,
On the guilt you dare decide.”

“Friends who have from friends been parted
Let Old Christmas give advice ;
Be ye not too stubborn hearted,
Pride too oft is over nice.
Ye who claim the reparation,
May have given first offence ;
End at once the separation,
Kindest words prove greatest sense.”

“ Far above the lore of sages,
 Comes the lesson of my youth,
 Handed down from distant ages ;
 Words of comfort, words of truth.
 States may pass, and empires vanish,
 Yet these simple words shall live,
 Hopes to strengthen, fears to banish—
 ‘ Lord forgive, as we forgive.’ ”

WHITE VIOLETS.

WHEN the first white violets bloomed that year,
 And the days were long, and the skies were clear,
 And the thrush came singing a gladsome strain,
 My heart knew nothing of pain and fear !
 But before the flowers of summer filled
 The long green lanes, where the blackbird trill'd
 Its mystic melody once again,—
 Somebody came, and my heart was thrilled.

Ay! my heart was thrilled with a new content,
 For love in his wanderings gently sent
 His arrows to me, with such quiet grace
 That my pride was broken, my spirit bent !
 O! down through the woodlands, somebody came,
 And under the trees he whispered my name,
 And pressed sweet kisses upon my face ;
 And my heart throbbed only for *him* and fame !

But the days grew short, and the shadows deep,
 And the chilling winds would drearily sweep
 Down where the frail white violets died,
 In the autumn lanes where I used to weep.
 Then winter brought his tribute of snows,
 And a weary pain in my heart arose,
 For my longings remained unsatisfied ;
 And my life was blighted with bitter woes.

So now, ah me! in the lanes, as of yore,
The first white violets bloom once more;

But love, and fame, and my hopes are dead,
And the eager yearnings of youth are o'er.
O! the future will promise new love, I know,
And fame may come, and sorrow may go,
But the early glory of life hath fled,
And my heart is filled with the old, old woe!

Yet forever the frail white flowers will bring
Sweet thoughts to me of that happy Spring,

Ere I knew sorrow, and pain and fear;
Ere fortune vanished, and love took wing.
And my heart, ah me! in its sadness may
Find some sweet rest in the lanes to-day,

Where the first white violets bloom this year.—
But love, my love, *you* are gone for aye!

MARIE TREVELYAN.

IANTHE.

BY LEONARD LLOYD.

SCENE IV.—*A Village Churchyard—Sunset—Ianthe kneeling by a Grave.*

(CHORISTERS *chanting in the Church.*)

Look from thy glory
Christ! for thy story
Is winning its way to the heart of mankind—
They who were spurning
Thy pity, and turning
Groped for lost light in the solitude, blind—
They who were weeping,
They who were sleeping,
They who were seeking but failing to find—
They who were sinning,
Unconsciously spinning
The shroud to enfold them, their funeral pall—

They who were clinging
About Thce, and bringing
The sorrows and sins which were wont to enthrall—
They who in bearing
Life's burden, despairing
Rush to the river to welcome the wave—
They who defiling
Thy image, beguiling
The innocent maid to her purity's grave—
They who are living
Thy life of forgiving,
They who have found thee a friend in their need—
They who were bending
To idols, and lending
Their hearts to a homage of golden gained greed—
They who were drinking
Life's pleasures, and shrinking
From Death the forerunner of glory to come—
They with hope faded
Fighting unaided,
Struggling for truth in the solitude, dumb—
They with days numbered,
Tottering cumbered
With years and with yearnings for mercies now missed—
They who beginning
The world would be winning,
They whom the fickle lipped Fortune hath kissed—
They, who heart broken
With sorrow unspoken
Bend like bruised reeds in the blasts of thy wrath—
They who were roaming
Alone in the gloaming,
Waiting the stars which fair night might bring forth—
They who were missing
Their lost ones, and kissing
The brow that was cold, and the lips that were still—
They who were scorning
Each terrible warning,
Hirelings of Satan and working his will—

They who were bitter,
 And thought it were fitter
 To die than to live with no God in the land—
 They who were fearful,
 They who were tearful,
 They who thy pitiful voice could withstand—
 All would be turning
 To Thee, with a yearning
 To grasp in the darkness the strength of a hand.

IANTHE. Sweet Mother! do you know that I am here
 Kneeling so near you on the grass-grown sod?
 Will you not hear my whisper? is your heart
 Closed as this grave is 'gainst compassion? God!
 I would have given all I had save her
 Who was my all, my mother! but is now
 A crowned immortal, or a thing of clay
 Which once had life and hath not. I have called
 Day after day, and still no answer comes—
 Unless the breeze which cools my fevered brow,
 Unless the flowers which lift their heads and sigh,
 Unless the sun which hides his blushing face
 Behind the little church be answers. I have strewn
 Fresh flow'rets on her grave, and there they lie—
 Some withered, as she withered, in their bloom,
 And some still panting in a living death
 Such as I live and die not. Mother mine!
 Share you my sorrows? know you that my Love
 Hath gone from me? as Christ and heaven have gone
 From the lost spirits fallen by their sin
 From heavenly places! gone from me unforgiven!
 For I was hard, and held forgiveness back,
 Calling him perjured; scorning to receive
 His pity for my love, and passion pain,
 His *love* another's. Will he come again,
 And hold me in his arms as in the days
 Which died when he departed? Shall I lie
 In lingering caress of lavish love

Which knows no stay nor slaking? or will Death
 Open his arms and take me to *his* heart
 And kill me with hard kisses? Pity me
 Cold cruel Death and spare me—I am young
 And have not wronged thee! I am sad and tired,
 And fain would yield me prisoner to sleep,
 But fear that thou would'st come and snatch my breath
 Foul ravisher of life and living love.
 Pity me Death! and let me lie unharmed
 Among the flowers a little.

(*She lies down with her head resting on the grave*).

How the dew

Hath risen like soft memories around her bed,
 Her bed and mine! We are so near,
 And God is nearer.—Mother dear good night—
 I am so weak and weary.

(*Sleeps*).

(*An escort of Angels descend*).

1ST. ANGEL. Speak softly! she must pass away in sleep,
 And feel no pain. Then will we bear her soul
 Through yonder gates to glory.

2ND. ANGEL. She is fair!

3RD. ANGEL. And shall be fairer.

4TH ANGEL. Innocence is shrined
 In every lineament!

(*LANTHE moaning in her sleep*).

Kind Death! sweet Death!

Leave me a little longer.

5TH ANGEL. My poor child!
 When she awakes immortal she will know
 And spring to meet her mother. Oh! I've longed,
 Even amid the bounteous bliss of heaven,
 To pillow her fair head upon my breast
 As when she was a child, and ran to me
 With every childish sorrow.

6TH ANGEL.

How her face
Pales in the starlight.—We will scatter snows
About her body from the heavens; a shroud
Fit for such virgin purity.

7TH ANGEL.

She sighs—
A deep drawn sigh of suffering—and her hands
Are pressed against her heart as if in pain.

5TH ANGEL. God! command Death slay her quickly.

(*The Spirit of Ianthe rising from the prostrate body*).

Mother!

1ST. ANGEL. Let us away to God!

(*The Angels ascend bearing Ianthe in their midst*).

(*To be Continued*).

A SERENADE.

SLEEPS my lady? Are those eyes
Closed that beam like sunshine waking?
Well may day desert the skies,
All the spacious west forsaking;
Well may peep the starlight pale,
And, amid the shadows umber,
Mute sit thrush and nightingale,
Sweetly frozen into slumber.

Creeps apace the hush of eve,
Earth in idleness reposes,
Only the dainty dewdrops weave
Necklaces on beds of roses;
The very lute aside is thrown,
Vocal once to rosy fingers,
And within my heart alone
All its music lives and lingers.

Vision-loaded hands has Night;
Is there none that I can borrow,
Fit to minister delight
And reprove a secret sorrow?

Darkening æther ! darkening earth !
 Ye shall wake again in glory—
 Will the morrow bring me mirth ?
 Will my lady heed my story ?

G. M. JAMESON.

EPITAPHS.

A REMARK of Wm. Godwin's in his *Essay on Sepulchres* is striking. He notices that (p. 40,) " Ordinary tombstones are removed much after the manner that the farmer removes the stubble of his year's crop, that he may make room for the seed of the next. Go into any country churchyard. Three-fourths of the tombstones you will find dated within the last 20 or 30 years." *Sic transit gloria mundi.* It is a dying world, time and all its records fast hasten to nonentity, busy worldlings eking out their little life may in a certain sense be said to *act history*, whilst a few of the more thoughtful, wise, and studious sort busy themselves with *writing history*. It has been the fashion to consider that the latter class of men perform an office of great dignity, and so they do no doubt when they so write as that, fitting the definition of the old Greek philosopher, it becomes "philosophy teaching by example." After all it is antiquarianism treated *en gros*, as an antiquarian is the historian in detail. There was a bright and witty Frenchman who wrote a book which he styled *L'Histoire en style Lapidaire*—wherein after the manner of an epitaph he gave his record of each notability drifted by, and down the long stream of time. It is written with all the terseness and correctness which distinguish the prose style of our neighbours so very favourably from our own—myself I have often thought that an historian is but a wholesale epitaph writer: whilst unfortunately, from either ignorance, prejudice, or the perversion of party, he often makes his history to resemble an epitaph in the French sense, namely of untruthfulness. For there is a proverb runs *mentir comme une épitaphe*.

Some have questioned whether an epitaph ought to be perfectly truthful. Give a man his deserts say they, "and who shall escape whipping," and if you insist that Rhadamanthine judgment be inscribed on the tomb of every dying sinner, might not the

best be found but “an unprofitable servant.” The beauty and wisdom of proverbs consists in this, that you may produce pithy sentences on many subjects, which take opposite sides, so that the wisdom of the proverb consists simply in the wisdom of the person who cites the right one at the right moment. “In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom,” and “too many cooks spoil the broth.” The latter is a very homely illustration, but probably fits appropriately many more occasions in common life than the statelier aphorism that precedes and contradicts it—and very naturally so, for there are many more foolish meddlers in the world than men of counsel. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a most ancient saw, and registers so strong a protest against unfavourable epitaphs as would certainly lead in practice to immorality and the sin that lies encased in the sugared confections of compliment. It is hardly worthy the pain to elaborately settle the point, for whether or not nature *abhor a vacuum* we have no philosophy to determine, but human nature most certainly abhors a hard and fast definition. So much so as almost to make it appear that rules, and laws, and definitions of all sorts are only made like artillery-targets, to be broken to pieces in practice. Perhaps from some of the epitaphs which follow, the reader may be able to construct for himself a notion of what an epitaph may, might, and ought to be in this and in other respects.

To begin first with amusing epitaphs is my intention, whether they have ever been actually inscribed or not upon a memorial stone. Many witty ones have been suggested by some fulsome panegyric inscribed on the tomb of an eminent man, or circulated in newspapers at the time of his decease. The spite shown in them is not to be taken literally nor as deliberately meant, nor as indicating malignancy. For instance, when Pitt died Byron wrote:—

With death doomed to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who *lied* in the Chapel,
Now lies in the Abbey.

Undoubtedly it might have been truer of many men than Pitt. Yet I do not suppose it has hurt Pitt in the estimation of anybody, and the dexterity exhibited in the rhymes has without ques-

tion amused a great many who have read it. If so, manifestly it has done good and not harm.

Few can fail to be amused at the epitaph on Capt. Jno. So :—

So did he live, and so did he die,
So, so say you so, so let him lie.

Tissington, in his collection, gives a different version of this and very much worse. I thought that the genuine one was in Stepney Churchyard, and written for some skipper, or captain of a trading vessel, but such writers as Mr. Jacobs or the Rev. Mr. Booth, would object to these as exhibiting unseemly jesting on a solemn occasion and on hallowed ground.

If I might venture to record an opinion on this point, I should say it was very desirable to let everyone have free play for his inclination, and the only veto exercised upon tomb-inscriptions should be to prevent the cutting in of any immodest expression or phrase—*si entre le sublime et le ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas*—and if a man or his friends be so constituted as to wish to figure in public in the last act of life's tragedy in the character of buffoon, I would not withhold the cap and bells. In the motley of human life, Patch, the fool, is as much needed as Wolsey, the Cardinal, to fill the stage role, and I think the churchyard should be like the church itself, a gathering from human society with nothing shut out except indecency and vice. It should always be borne in mind that what we call extremely proper to-day, may in another hundred years become absolutely outrageous. I do not imagine that any man who had to build a new college now, could dedicate it without profanity to the *body of Christ*, and yet how trippingly it runs when we turn it into Latin as *Corpus Christi*. There is a profound modesty in not being squeamish, and much immodesty underlies the euphuistic purity that we perceive to be so much in vogue at the present moment.

Another epitaph that means no harm, and yet conveys forcibly a poet's disapprobation, is that of Burns :—

Hic jacet wee Johnny,
Whoe'er thou art, O reader, know
That Death has murdered Johnny;
An' here his body lies fu' low,
For soul he ne'er had ony.

This John Wilson printed Burns' works in the Kilmarnock edition, and he no doubt got well to windward of the muse-struck ploughman as to the golden "Geordies." Burns was, like all poets, out of a too highly wrought sensitiveness, apt now and again to fling out spitefully at his best friends—as witness his biting epitaph upon Mrs. Riddell, of Woodley Park, who is said (I know not with what justice), to have been really his warm friend and admirer:—

Here lies now a prey to insulting neglect,
 What once was a butterfly gay in life's beam,
 Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
 Want only of goodness denied her esteem.

The following is simply witty, and is of course but a fictitious epitaph:—

ON A SOT.

Five letters his life and his death will express,
 He scarce knew A B C, and he died of X S.

There is a nonsensical rustic ignorance about the following, quoted by Booth (p. 164), which an educated man could hardly arrive at except by imitation. I think it must be copied from a genuine inscription somewhere, though as usual no indication is given of any locality:—

ON A CHURCH BELL-RINGER.

In ringing from his youth he always took delight;
 Now his bell has rung, and his soul has taken flight,
 We hope to join the quire of heavenly singing,
 That far excels the harmony of ringing.

Everybody has had a fling at Soame Jenyns' epitaph on Johnson. I will not yield to anyone in admiration of our great Samuel, stopping short only of an Ultramontane idolatry; but I find that epitaph to be absolutely just. Booth calls it an illiberal and petulant attack. Jenyns admits Johnson to have been—

Religious, moral, generous, and humane.

What right have you after this to take offence when he adds that he was—

Ill-bred and overbearing in dispute,
 A scholar and a Christian—yet a brute.

There is very unusual outspokenness in these two lines, it must be allowed, but they are clever and so true that I think it would be safe to risk a life upon the defence if challenged. Johnson would approve, if he could be raised in a happy mood to give us his own verdict. He would be likely enough to say, "Sir, I cudgell'd Jenyns well upon his *Free Enquiry*; it was natural that when I dropped the staff the dog should bite hard, ha ! ha ! ha !" Allowing some superfluity for point's sake, what Soame says is true enough for a poet, quite.

We will now give one or two renderings from the Greek. There is a boastful one, though splendidly large, on

PHILIP OF MACEDON.

I who Emathia first to battle led
Now bear the sod of Evis on my head ;
I, Philip, pass all former kings have done ;
If king surpass me let it be my son.

There is a noble epitaph, and sweetly beautiful,

ON XENOPHON.

Not into Persic lands alone
At Cyrus' call went Xenophon ;
But scaled Olympus cloudy hood,
Where before blazing Zeus he stood.
Sweeping the harp, he chanted o'er
Sweet minstrel-tales of Hellas shore,
Or softly sang to sapphire skies
The words of Socrates the Wise.

ON THEMISTOCLES.

By the salt margin of the deep blue brine,
Themistocles ! we rear this tomb of thine,
That thy tall Pharos may the merchant guide
To his sweet home where household gods preside ;
Or if in fight she tempt the stormy sea,
Athens may triumph as she looks on thee.

These few specimens are all that our space will permit us to set before the reader to show how splendid a thing the old Greek understood the epitaph or mortuary epigram to be.

One or two from the Latin should perhaps be adduced before passing to the French and English; and although the best can

hardly be said to be equal to the Greek, yet a few are very beautiful, and have the distinguishing merit of terseness, which renders them difficult indeed to recast well in an English translation.

Take for instance the inscription said to have been placed on Virgil's tomb :—

Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
Parthenope. Cecini pascua, rura, duces.

The Rev. Mr. Wright has put it into four English lines, but he loses all the brevity, and with it all the beauty. The closest rendering that has been attempted is the following :—

Me Mantua bore, Calabria took, then, on Death's wings,
Parthenope. I sang of shepherds, ploughmen, kings.

Some of Martial's epigrams constitute elegant epitaphs, but in such cases the idea contained in them is usually borrowed from the Greek.

The following by Quintus Ennius on himself will be very interesting to those who see in it the foundation of that fine idea in Shakespeare's sonnet where he tells his mistress that if only he describe her in his verse she shall live long indeed, for that she shall be—

Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

Nemo me decoret lacrumis, nec funera, fletu
Faxit. Cur? volito viva per ora virum.

This has been turned—

To me no tears, no funeral give;
For why? In all men's mouths I live.

This is well enough. It is ancient, and has a terse force, and consequently is preferable to J. Davies' rendering in four lines—but it loses the spirit and poetry of the very fine original, which is better preserved in this distich :—

Withhold your obsequies, tomb, tears, and pain,
In living mouths I live my life again.

But Ennius appears to have been excellent in epitaph. Few better have ever been devised than that by him on Scipio Africanus :—

Hic est ille situs, cui nemo civi' neque hostis quivit pro factis
reddere operæ pretium.

This is plain prose, but of very fine texture, and may receive fashionment fair enough in an English couplet, thus—

Here lies a man whom neither friend nor foe
Could deeds to equal his on him bestow.

Professor Orellius of Zurich has culled many lovely inscriptions from the Catacombs at Rome. Possibly the very loveliest is this :—

Large! fili! bene quiescas
Mater tua rogat te
Ut me ad te recipias.
Vale.

Thus, Englished—

Alfred, my son, thou restest well,
Oh let thy mother's suit prevail,
Receive her, with thee, child! to dwell,
All hail!

French epitaphs are of quite a different school, and though, of course, many may be found that are beautifnl, yet they often take the form of epigram, and turn as often upon a point of wit as of sentiment. What Boileau thought upon the subject may be judged from the following, which he considered the best he had ever written ;—

Ci git ma femme; ah! qu'elle est bien,
Pour son repos, et pour le mien!

My wife lies here; 'tis well, God knows,
Her soul finds rest, and mine repose.

Scarron wrote one for himself in a bitterly satirical vein :—

Celui qu'ici maintenant dort
Fit plus du pitié que d'envie,
Et souffrit mille fois la mort
Avant que de perdre la vie.
Passant, ne fais ici de bruit,
Prends bien garde qu'on ne l'éveille;
Car voici la première nuit
Que le pauvre Scarron someille.

He who sleeps beneath this stone
 Should wake no pity, but a moan,
 A thousand times he suffered death
 Before he drew his latest breath.
 Tread lightly, Passer-by ! this mound,
 Lest thou recall him at a sound.
 Here was the first night found, could steep
 The tortured Scarron's brain in sleep.

That which Piron wrote for himself when he was rejected by the French Academy is eminently satirical and witty :—

Ci git Piron, qui ne fut rien,
 Pas même academicien.

This is so pithy as to be scarcely translatable. An approach to a rendering may be made thus :—

Here Piron lies less, in perdition,
 Than nothing—than Academician.

One of the most absurd of French epitaphs is that said to be placed in some country churchyard on a parishioner who died and was buried in Paris :—

Ci git Monsieur H——, que a été enterré à Paris.

But it is paralleled by one in Sussex :—

Here lie two children dear,
 One buried at Portsea, the other here.

It should be remembered that up to the middle of the 14th century all our epitaphs were in French. Henry III.'s epitaph in Westminster Abbey, 1272, is so embossed round the ledge of his tomb, with a prayer for mercy on him. Useless or useful there is something beautiful in this prayer for the soul, gloomily devout as the sweep of the cathedral aisle itself, and emotional to the heart of man as organ notes from the Italiennes, Palestrina. At Kingswear, in Devonshire, we find :—

Vos qui ici venez,
 Pur l'alme Philip priez,
 Trente jours de pardon,
 Serra vostre guerdon.

You who come near this clay,
 For soul of Philip pray,
 Thirty days absolved of sin
 Holy, shall you thereby win.

And is not that early one to some member of the Saville family at Thornhill, Yorkshire, very lovely and weirdly blent with all that is beautiful in nature, and mystical in the soul of man :—

Bonys emongq, stongs lys ful
 Steyl, gwylste the sawle wan-
 deris, were that God wylethe.

His bones amongst these stones lie still,
 While his soul wanders at God's will.

Two of the finest epitaphs that are anywhere to be found are written by Englishmen, though in Latin. They ought to find a record here. The one is on Thomas Crouch, at King's College Chapel, Cambridge :—

Aperiet Deus tumulos ; et educet
 Nos de sepulchris,
 Qualis eram dies isthœc cum
 Venerit, scies.

The trumpet of the Lord will burst our tomb and show
 What manner of man he was lies harboured here below,
 Good stranger take thy path, more now thou can'st not know.

The other is the well-known epitaph of Wren, which was set up by Mylne (who built Blackfriars Bridge), near the choir-entrance of St. Paul's :—

Lector, Si, monumentum requiris circumspice.
 Reader, if you seek his monument look round.

It is said to have been borrowed, but I do not know whence, and I do not know who did the Latin, but the arrangement is generally good and the idea grand, although I think the author ought to have written *requiras* in place of *requiris*. However, if it be so, we may leave it to the *Cathedral Chapter* to correct its *verse*,—or *version*, to speak more correctly.

Ben Johnson has written one of the finest in any language on

the Countess of Pembroke, though, as Cumberland proved, he got it from the Greek anthology :—

Underneath this sable hearse,
Lies the subject of all verse ;
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death ! ere thou canst find another,
Good and fair and wise as she,
Time shall throw his dart at thee.

There is an eloquent epitaph that is often placed on the tomb of a lovely girl :—

Rest gentle shade ! and wait thy Maker's will ;
Then rise unchanged, and be an angel still.

Haydn in his *Dictionary of Dates* says that it is a paraphrase from Lord Herbert's verses to a beautiful young nun in the island of Murano, near Venice.

I have confessed that I am not averse to the ludicrous dogrell in which many rustic clowns delight, and which Mr. Jacobs in the most solemn manner denounces in an extremely dull paper on epitaphs, where all is as level as a bowling green, and the etiquette as rigid as tea at a young lady's boarding school. All that exhibits human character ought to be recorded, and I shall deplore it much when parsons think it necessary to exercise a rigid censorship of the epitaphs that are to be daily glanced over by the shadow of their steeple. What harm can arise by that on a postillion :—

Here I lays
Killed by a chaise.

These chawbacon buddings into verse are sprigs of a rude native poetry that furnish much contemplation to a Hamlet seeking for posies in the yew-tree yard.

But that on Dr. Cole, Dean of Lincoln, is extraordinary for its familiar irreverence as coming from the relatives of an ecclesiastical dignitary :—

And when the latter trump of Heaven shall blow,
Cole, now raked up in ashes, then shall glow.

That on Sir Fernegan, in a churchyard in Somersetshire, contrasts

strongly with the foregoing, both for its pathetic religious sentiment, and the fine natural rythm it discloses:—

Here lies Sir Fernegan
(An ancient Knighte)
Jesus Christ, both God and man,
Save thy servant Fernegan !

Contrast such a thing with a modern oddity gathered from an American cemetery:—

Cottons and cambrics all adieu,
And muslins too, farewell ;
Plain, striped and figured, old and new,
Three quarters, yard or ell ;
By nail and yard I've measured ye,
As customers inclined—
The churchyard now has measured me,
And nails my coffin bind.

Or the Pennsylvanian one, which runs thus into a low familiarity:—

Eliza, sorrowing, rears the marble slab
To her dear John, who died of eating crab.

But here is an English curiosity from the cemetery of Montmartre:—

Poor Charles !

His innocent pleasure was to row on the water.

Alas !

He was the victim of this fatal desire, which conducted him to the tomb.

Reader ! consider that the water in which he was drowned is the amassed tears of his relatives and friends.

So that his relatives and friends ought to have been tried for manslaughter. This frigid hypocrisy and masquerade of sorrow is as contemptible as can well be conceived.

One of the most unaccountable things ever penned is perhaps that to Lady O'Looney, in Pewsey Churchyard, Wiltshire:—

Here lies the body of
Lady O'Looney,
Great niece of Burke, commonly called the Sublime.

She was
Bland, passionate, and deeply religious ;
Also she painted in water colours,
And sent several pictures to the Exhibition.
She was first cousin to Lady Jones,
And of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is evidently the emanation of a female pen. It might have come from her ladyship's maid on learning that she was remembered in her mistress' will. But how such an effusion came ever to be inscribed is worthy of close enquiry on the spot. Her relation to Burke the Sublime is well hit upon, but one is left in doubt whether her pictures at the Royal Academy, or her relationship to the titled Jones, form the ground of her admission into the communion of saints. If the former is to be accepted we can understand Gainsborough's last words, "We are all going to Heaven, and Vandyke is of the company," and we may consider that George III. made his artists by charter not only gentlemen, but angels. Nor can any Mr. Jacobs be so prim or so devoted to a puritanical seriousness as to desire that this manifestation of human nature in its vain absurdity should have been suppressed. Thank goodness, accident has proved here, as often elsewhere, wiser than philosophy.

Garrick has done many good epitaphs. Perhaps his Hogarth, which is still to be seen at Chiswick, is his best :—

Farewell, great painter of mankind,
Who reached the noblest point of art !
Whose pictured morals charm the mind,
And through the eye instruct the heart.

If genius fire thee, Reader, stay ;
If nature touch thee, drop a tear.
If neither move thee, turn away,
For Hogarth's honoured dust lies here.

Mr. Dodd considers that Johnson's on the same subject is better :—

The hand of him here torpid lies,
 That drew th' essential form of grace ;
 Here closed in death th' attentive eyes,
 That saw the manners in the face.

He adds that Garrick borrowed from Vinny Bourne's Latin poems, and Johnson's last line is taken from what Pliny says of Zeuxis' portrait of Penelope, that in it "he painted the manners of that queen."

If I had to give a verdict, I should give it against Johnson and for Garrick. To adopt Johnson's own mode of criticising, we may say that it is not of much instruction nor utility to inform us that the hand of a dead man is torpid, nor that his eyes have ceased to perceive.

Our pleasant task has now, as all things will, come to an end, and with it the year fraught, with so much of fate to men and nations has foreclosed the mortgage of its lease. It has itself gone down into the great tomb of years—Eternity ; and its epitaph shall be our envoy as Seventy Seven rings in :—

EPITAPH ON THE YEAR 1876.

Hark ye the knell ! It is a year that dies,
 Thing of eight hundred million destinies ;
 The babe is born to-day, that bell will toll
 To Hades, ere fourscore such measures roll ;
 When all that breathe upon the earth to-day,
 Have borne the Potter back his sherd of clay.

C. A. WARD.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

THE fair faint dawn, like one new risen from Night's
 Dark bed of death, looks from the heightening east,
 Stirs the new-rustling air with moving life,
 Smiling all sadly on a rust-hinged door,
 Closed faster than the wall, whose ancient strength
 It, sullen, interrupts from all without.
 About it climb dark tendrils, and the hard
 Sere fibres of such noxious weeds as grow

From long neglect and useless lapse of time,
Rejoicing in their evil strength, and fain
To hide all entry from the outward eye.
Yet one stands waiting with his garments green
And wet from trailing on th' unholly ground—
Stands, with his royal mien and patient grace,
Kind pity radiant in his luminous eyes,
With amber glory all suffusing round:
And not the lamp he carries shines more clear—
Though the soft robe reflect its light some space—
A robe of seamless white, more soft, more smooth,
Than sea bird's breast that shelters there her young.
He knocks—no answer cometh from within—
The grasses rise, and view him all in awe;
To Him the trees bow branches, fresh with rest,
Whose fragile leaves each other whisper low—
The evil climbers tremble to their souls—
All wonder such appeal responseless waits.
Upon His head strange semblance of a crown
He wears, and on His hands and feet imprest
He bears the signature of God's stern love
Above His heart His robe doth show one stain,
Deep scarlet on pure white, the greatest, last
Sign manual of redemption of the world.
Arc upon arc of light is lifting, still
He stands. Then halt the upward bearing waves
Of flying night and swift incoming day;
These flowing on, now rosy bright and clear,
These back receding, heavy, dull and dark,
As wild sea-waters on a stormy shore,
Or seas opposed, pausing on either side
Before a rock to whose strength they homage pay,
Halt suddenly their foremost rank, and heap
Above their crests a hollow arch of foam,
Impending in a mighty pause—till all,
Roused as by trump, fall, and swell on—so these
Together rush—surge round Him as their Lord,
And blend into such perfect tone of shade

As never yet was seen, or e'er will be.
 Yet mid such homage gently still He stands,
 The Centre and the great crowned King of all:
 Mindless of bowed obeisance as His right:
 With face serene and wistful watching eyes—
 Ope thy heart's gate, O Man, and let Him in!

WILLIAM INGRAM COBBIN.

AT THE CASEMENT.

PLACE my chair beside the casement, let me look upon the sea
 For it ever seems to murmur, messages of peace to me,
 And I think its roughest voices cadences of melody.

In the morning when the waves come creeping softly up the shore,
 They are angels of my fancy, bringing to the cottage door
 Tokens from far mystic isles, whose fields no mortal may ex-
 plore,—

Tokens from the birds' songs, music only breathed in visioned
 bowers;

Gifts of myrrh and fragrant spices, pomegranates kissed of
 showers;

Garlands wove of lemon blossoms, braided knots of golden
 flowers.

So to me they bring a gift and message, without sound of speech,
 Save a murmur as of sea-shells; and I see their white arms reach
 Toward me as they trail their garments, silverly along the beach.

Eyes they have of lustrous gleaming, forms of beauty more divine
 Than poets feign for Aphrodite, rising rosy from the brine,
 Or, singing lone in Enna's bowers, luckless lily Proserpine!

These are not the fabled mermaids, not the nymphs of Triton's
 caves,

Sleek-haired, treacherous ocean sirens, kissing mortals to their
 graves;

Angel forms they have and walk with holier feet across the waves!

Well I know it is my fancy gives them shape and colouring,
 Makes them speak a mystic language, makes the songs they
 seem to sing,

And the salt foam on their foreheads be as jewels glistening.

Yet, perchance, the thought, which changes with the hue my fancy lends

To the picture it is painting, is a minister that blends Touches, dim and faint, of Heaven, with the fancy it transcends !

I am but a thing of trouble, tossing on a restless bed, Racked with pain of life and languor; yet, whene'er my thought will wed

With the music of the ocean, I am soothed and comforted.

All the dim and ceaseless aching, all the darkness and the pain, Falleth from me with their burden, just as in the summer rain Falleth to the deeps, and leaves the heights all blue and clear again.

Lo ! the sun burns, in one blaze of glory, sea, and sky, and shore ! Wheel my chair before the casement, while his gold rays glimmer o'er

All the mystic opalescent pavement of the ocean floor !

T. ATKINS.

EMERALD GEMS.

THE "Emerald Isle" with goodly gems
Is richly spangled o'er,
They sparkle bright from mountain top
Down to the sea-girt shore.
For centuries these gems have blazed
Beneath the orb of day,
And like the glory of her sons
Shall never fade away.

But not alone 'mid landscapes fair
Do treasures rare abound :
Within the deep, dark Wicklow mines,
The precious gold is found.
Like Erin's greatness, now extolled
In poetry and song,
Tho' long obscured by ages dark
Of anarchy and wrong.

And, oh ! there is a priceless gem
 Illumines Irish soil ;
 It gilds the mansion of the peer
 And glads the peasant's toil.
 This jewel sheds alike its rays
 In cot or lordly hall—
 'Tis virtue shrined in female form,
 The purest gem of all.

T. C. S. CORRY, M.D.

ACROSTIC.

C HRISTMAS ! welcome ! praise and pray !
 H ang up miseltoe, holly and bay ;
 R ound the red fire with yule logs bright,
 I n happy circles gather at night !
 S ing olden song our fathers sang,
 T ill roof and walls with chorus rang ;
 M errily pass each flowing bowl,
 A nd let the hours in pleasure roll,
 S ince Christmas cheers both heart and soul !

J. S. THOMPSON.

“ QUI PATITUR VINCIT.”

HE set his face like flint against the blast,
 And vowed to conquer ! and the years that passed
 Found him and left him fighting ; till at last,
 White-haired and weary, he lay down to die,
 And he had not prevailed ; but in his eye
 A light, as if of triumph, shone, and victory
 Was in his smile, who vanquished lay. “ Success
 Is worthy in a worthy cause ; not less,
 'Tis worth while failing in a noble strife,
 And so,” he said, “ I count well spent my life.”

R. I. P.

THE FEAST OF BELSHAZZAR.

'TWAS night in Babylon, yet gay and loud
 Rose the high glee of pleasure's thoughtless crowd ;
 And there was hurrying of busy feet,
 Crowding and pressing through each pillar'd street ;
 And sparkling gems, and rustling robes of state
 In the proud throng that sought the palace-gate ;
 While louder still arose the minstrel strain,
 And shouts of triumph from the youthful train.
 Dazzling with light the lofty domes aspire,
 And Bel's huge temple glows a mount of fire—
 This was the night of Joy, the gorgeous feast
 Of him whose birthright was the golden East.

Oft as I muse upon that wondrous hour,
 The scene obeys creative Fancy's pow'r.
 E'en now, voluptuous King, thy form I see,
 Thy lordly satraps bending low the knee ;
 Thy priests and seers, the wisest of the land,
 Who bow'd with years and honours round thee stand.

Yes, there throughout th' illuminated halls,
 Blazing with light and beauty, where the falls
 Of perfum'd waters with refreshing sound,
 From many a Jasper-fount are heard around—
 There on a throne of ivory and gold,
 While rich brocaded robes his limbs enfold,
 Belshazzar holds his state, beneath the ray
 Of lamps, which shed an artificial day
 O'er the fair scene where jocund pleasure smiles,
 And Art voluptuous care and thought beguiles.

Before his royal feet all nations pour
 Their richest treasures. Ophir's golden ore,
 Egypt's soft webs, and Afric's glitt'ring plumes,
 India's choice gems, Arabia's sweet perfumes ;
 Her rich empurpled robes Sidonia sends,
 Her fairest marble rocky Paros lends.

Balm-breathing Saba yields her odours rare,
 Fair Bactria's musky breezes fill the air:
 Jewels and balms thus swell Belshazzar's state,
 While peers and warriors round their sovereign wait.

Mirth reigns supreme; the feast is wild and high,
 And the last seal is set to blasphemy:
 For lo! the Monarch speaks, and at his word
 Are brought the sacred vessels of that Lord,
 The life of life itself, the soul of soul,
 Whose majesty and power sway the whole
 Of wide creation's space, and whose dread might
 Proclaim'd Him soon th' avenging Infinite.
 They come—thrice holy vessels—pure from stain
 Of heathen hand, the glories of that fane
 Where God vouchsafed to dwell, where once rose high
 The sacred notes of Judah's melody.
 Ere in His chast'ning wrath th' offended Lord
 Gave up His chosen to the tyrant sword.

They come—they come—more loud the sackbut peals
 Its notes of triumph: when the King reveals
 Their gorgeous beauty shouts of joy break out,
 Like some glad Pœan o'er an army's rout.

“Fill me the bowl the reckless monarch cries,
 'Twere wasted else on bigot mysteries;
 If there be magic in the draught 'twere well
 Belshazzar should be first its power to tell.”
 The jewell'd cup then lifting to the skies
 The haughty Prince the Lord of lord's defies;
 To his false god the rich libation pours,
 And starry Heaven's unnumber'd host adores.

What ails the king? What spell has bound the crowd?
 For ev'ry face is pale, and ev'ry head is bow'd.
 Look! on the wall a vision strong and clear,
 A hand like man's, draws characters of fear.

It writes—in silence tracing—deep and low,
 A murmur runs along each glitt’ring row:
 Where is their merry music gone? ’tis hush’d
 Like a torch stifled, or a chaplet crush’d;
 ’Tis done—the sentence is complete, no more
 Is seen the hand they shuddered at before.
 But still the words remain, and who can gaze
 Where brighter still burn those mysterious rays?
 Beside their radiance fades each earthly light,
 Which spangled late the mantle of the night;
 And one by one extinguish’d fade away,
 Like stars before the bright approach of day.
 Now haste ye! call the wise, who prescient trace
 The planets shining through th’ ethereal space;
 The seers who read with far-presaging eye,
 The secret signs which mark man’s destiny.

The Old Chaldeans come: yet all in vain,
 They seek the honors of the golden chain,
 The scarlet robe: the gifts the king would show’r
 On him who solv’d the mysteries of that hour.
 Unknown and undiscoverable shine
 The words late written by that hand divine;
 Till one an exile in that heathen land
 Inspir’d of heaven, one of the sorrowing band
 Who, with their harps upon the willows hung,
 Exchang’d for sighs the notes that Judah sung;
 And sunk in depths of woe, sat weeping low,
 Fast by the streams where Babel’s waters flow—
 For how could Israel’s captive race rejoice?
 How breathe the song, and lift th’ exulting voice?
 How could the tongue with notes of gladness sound,
 When nought but dark oppression hangs around?

Now Daniel came, and from his beaming eye
 There gleam’d a glory no one could defy;
 A holy armour fenced him as he trod
 That heathen court, the panoply of God.

What was to him the will of earthly lord ?
 Pleasure he heeded not, he feared not sword ;
 Earth's glories were but clouded in his sight—
 He had beheld the awful Infinite,
 To whom the Ancient of eternal days
 Was pleased the future's fearful veil to raise.

Hear that calm voice, those mighty accents roll,
 In tones that pierce and thrill the guilty soul !
 And each one feels as if his conscience spoke
 In the dread words that from the prophet broke.
 Each startled soul in terror hears the name
 Of Zion's God, eternal and the same ;
 Whose potent presence Earth's foundations own,
 While Heaven sustains His everlasting throne.
 Then on his eye prophetic, quickly rose
 The dark'ning vision of their coming woes ;
 Then, with a guilty empire's fate imprest,
 The sacred fervour burning in his breast,
 He spoke—a silence struck the courtier train,
 Like that which broods upon a battle plain,
 Where hearts have ceased to throb and limbs to quiver,
 And youth, and joy, and beauty sunk for ever.

“I come not for thine honours, haughty king ;
 Thy riches perish with thee ; they can bring
 No peace, no joy, while every earthly charm
 Withers before the Lord's uplifted arm.
 Not as thy senseless gods of wood and stone
 Was he who raised great Nabonassar's throne ;
 And when his heart, puffed up with power and pride,
 By wealth and luxury was turned aside,
 Expelled him from his kingdom and his home,
 Among the beasts of earth condemned to roam.
 The hand is from that God, and know, dismayed,
 That He, by whom all earthly powers are weighed,
 Hath found thee wanting ! 'tis by Him decreed,
 That thou shalt yield thy sceptre to the Mede.

Soon shalt thou hear, within these stately walls,
The loud exulting cry when empire falls.
This night thy royal pow'r shall pass away,
And thou no more shalt see the light of day."

The Prophet ceas'd, and took his silent way
By the King's golden domes—the long array
Of stately fanes, where in amazement roam,
The white-robed priests of Bel's dishonoured home.

Do none regard him? No—each passer by
Beholds the stranger seer with careless eye.
Yet, ere the morn, the foe whose hosts in vain
Have sought the golden city's walls to gain,
Shall turn Euphrates from his wonted course,
And fill old Babel with his rebel force.

But hark! what means that terror striking sound?
That roaring tumult rising all around?
Up from the river bed, still drawing near,
The tramp of warriors in full career—
By undefended gate, through empty street,
Hark to the din of thousand rushing feet!
They reach the palace, they have fill'd the court,
Shrieks wake the echoes which late rung with sport!
Like the resistless billows of the sea,
On rush the pride of Media's chivalry!
While Persia's legions move in deep array,
Eager to mingle in the fearful fray.
Gloomy and dark, like full-fraught thunder clouds,
Rolling together, clash the warrior crowds;
Their glitt'ring falchions flash athwart the eye,
The death-shriek mingles with the battle cry.
Fast as the troubled ocean's fury pours
Wave upon wave from never-failing stores,
So sweeps the rebel host with death-doomed sound,
Triumphant banners wildly waving round.
Oh! it were vain for human eye to glean
The many horrors of that battle scene.

Belshazzar hears within those crowded halls
 Death's piercing cry for music's dying falls ;
 Sees the rich robe with nobles' heart-blood stain'd ;—
 Dies on the throne where late in pride he reigned.

REV. THOS. B. SIKES, M.A. (Oxon.)

THE ANGEL TO THE CHILD.

(FROM THE GERMAN).

BESIDE the cradle where an infant slept
 Hovered an angel form, in white robes clad :
 And while with folded wing her watch she kept,
 These whispered words sang, mournfully and sad :—

“Sweet infant spirit, stay no longer here,
 This dreary earth thy purity will blight ;
 'Tis dim and sad—above, serene and clear—
 Fly up with me into eternal light.

Blossom of Paradise ! bloom not on Earth ;
 She will but crush, and fling thy life away :
 She will send tears to quench thy gay young mirth,
 And clouds to dim the sunlight of thy day.

Not that fair brow—not those clear truthful eyes,
 Blue as thy native Heaven, unconscious child—
 Not these for earth and earthly vanities—
 Not these for sin—for human passions wild.

Come, sweet one, let me bear thee on my wings,
 And soar with thee amid the starry bowers ;
 'Tis glorious there past all imaginings,
 Radiant with gems, and bright with fragrant flowers.

Heed not a mother's tears upon thy brow,
 She would not keep an angel from the skies :
 Then linger not, but let me bear thee now,
 All sinless as thou art, to Paradise.”

A moment's silence, and the form of light
 With noiseless wing soared upward to the sky—
 Sweet harps were heard amid the spirits' flight,
 And, on the earth, a mother's wailing cry.

CUPID'S CASTLE.

ONE summer morn, when flying high
 (Beyond the regions mortals spy),

Upborne on roseate wings,
 Love built a castle in the air—
 A wondrous edifice, and fair
 Above terrestrial things.

“Here will I dwell, 'mid azure skies,
 Where never sounds of earth arise,
 Nor any shadows lurk;
 Here will I bask me in the light
 Of sunbeams,” quoth the merry sprite,
 Elated with his work.

But ah, how many a lofty scheme
 Doth end as builders little dream!—

When (on a rainy day)
 The love-god sought his safe retreat,
 What time the palace was complete,
 Then did it melt away!

O Eros! ever blind pourtrayed,
 How often thus hath fate repaid
 The labours of thy hand!—
 What bright abode canst thou invent,
 Wherein to hide till storms are spent,
 That may securely stand?

M. TAYLOR.

SHAKESPERIAN MONOGRAPHS.

BERTRAM.

DR. JOHNSON is still considered a great authority in all matters appertaining to literature, and it may seem to many absolute sacrilege to take exception to anything the worthy philosopher either

said or did. But the learned doctor has given to Bertram, Count Rousillon, such a bad character that in an attempt to pourtray the characteristics of that nobleman, as depicted in the play of "All's Well that Ends Well," I must necessarily tread upon the corns of those people who admire the Sage of Fleet Street. Dr. Johnson appears to have got tired of his editorial task long before he reached the "minor" play which I have named, and to have given a hasty look through it, forming his opinions from a merely superficial perusal, and thereby obtaining a very faint idea of the claims which it possesses. This is what the worthy Doctor says concerning Bertram:—"I cannot reconcile my heart to Bertram, a man noble without generosity, and young without truth, who marries Helen as a coward, and leaves her as a profligate. When she is dead by his unkindness, he sneaks home to a second marriage, is accused by the woman he has wronged, defends himself by a falsehood, and is dismissed to happiness." According to this, the young Count is ungenerous, a liar, a coward, a profligate, and a sneak, and is blessed with a final happiness which he by no means deserves.

I will not attempt to recount the story of "All's Well that Ends Well." It would be an insult to the intelligence of my readers to suppose them unacquainted with the details of a play which, though rarely acted now-a-days, is perhaps one of the most interesting of the so-called "minor" plays of our national author. They will remember how the young Count is summoned to court, how a girl dependent on his mother's charity cures the king of a serious malady, and is forced upon Bertram as a wife; how he quits her immediately upon the marriage being celebrated, and with what promise he leaves her; how he conducts himself in Italy, and how he returns—all this must be familiar to all lovers of Shakespeare, and I will at once proceed in my task of endeavouring to divest my hero of the obloquy with which Dr. Johnson has bespattered him.

First, then, Bertram is alleged to have been ungenerous because of his conduct towards Helen, whom he is charged with marrying as a coward, and deserting as a profligate. Now, to properly understand the character of Bertram, it is necessary to bear in mind the period in which he lived, and the position in life which he

occupied. That age was vastly different to this or Dr. Johnson's. The aristocracy of that day comprised a world to themselves, distinct from and superior to those below them. Bertram has had this sense of superiority instilled into him, and hence the scorn with which he regards an alliance with a woman who "had her breeding as his father's charge," the idea of which raises in him that spirit which Dr. Johnson calls ungenerous, but which I prefer to call natural in one of his kind. His pride breaks forth—

A poor physician's daughter my wife! Disdain
Rather corrupt me ever!

In his interview with his mother and her protege, Bertram does not evince any of the characteristics with which Dr. Johnson has saddled him. He appears to be the worthy son of a worthy sire, and previous to the visit of Helen to the Court, and the (to him) unfortunate result, Bertram's character is free from any blame whatever. But when he hears the commands of his sovereign, and finds himself forced to wed a person he deems his inferior, his natural pride is greatly ruffled. But what can he do? To obey is distasteful; to disobey is ruin. He is urged to the marriage—

Which both thy duty and our power claims,
and his hesitation is threatened with—

Both my revenge and hate,

* * * * *

Without all terms of pity.

Therefore Bertram accepts the wife the fates have thrust upon him, but that the action is cowardly I deny. In fact, the speech wherein he consents to take Helen to wife is brave in the extreme, considering in whose presence he is. So much for the cowardice; now for the profligacy. That Bertram is no profligate is proved by his subsequent action. He parts from Helen in the most friendly terms, and acts in an entirely different manner to that which one would expect from a profligate such as Dr. Johnson would have us believe him to be. A profligate would not have left Helen at the door of the church. Therefore, the Count Rousillon is by no means a profligate.

The second count of indictment is that Bertram kills Helen by

his unkindness. In answer to this I urge that Helen does not die by anyone's unkindness, and that the rumour of her death is put forward at her own suggestion; and the intelligent student may here mark how the true character of Bertram becomes manifest when he receives news that his wife is dead. He did not in reality hate her, but it was the way in which she had been thrust upon him which excited his ire, and caused him to treat her in the manner in which he did. He has seen more of the world, and finds out how mistaken his notions have been. He hears of Helen's death, drops a tear to her memory, and on his return home laments her. It is with regard to this return home that the Doctor makes the most unfounded charge. He says that Bertram "sneaks home," whereas the fact is that he returns with the army in the natural course of events, and the second marriage is all arranged before he gets there.

The amour with the pretty Florentine lass, Diana, and the consequent dilemma in which he is placed on his return, are the two things most difficult to forgive in our hero. The first must be excused by the manners of the age, when every soldier had his mistress wherever he chanced to be; and the way in which he gets out of the latter must be gauged by the test of human nature. Shakespeare knew more of human nature than any writer, and the prevarication indulged in by Bertram is true to nature. I put it to any reader of this article whether, if they were placed in the same predicament as our poor Bertram was, they would not have done the selfsame thing. The Count is faced by the King, his mother, and all the courtiers, and is charged with injustice to one whom he considers a common woman; and it is human nature which makes him deny Diana's statement, and invent a story concerning the ring. This may appear a lame defence, but I do not wish to make out Bertram to be a superhuman individual; and I maintain that he amply atones for his sins of omission and commission when he takes Helen to his arms in the enthusiasm of a love which her supposed death had awakened, and her apparent resuscitation has fanned into life.

Thus is Bertram "dismissed to happiness," and although his conduct may not have been in strict accordance with the moral code of Dr. Johnson's time—a code then, as now, more talked about

than followed—yet he is a man whom we may regard as one of the best of the poet's creations. He is true to the nature of the age in which he lives, and though there are some actions of his which deserve blame, yet he is on the whole an admirable man, and one who improves upon acquaintance. Shakespeare did not intend Bertram as a specimen saint. He has painted him in his true colours, and we like him all the better for it. Were he a man who prided himself upon his goodness, we should join in Dr. Johnson's condemnation, but, as he stands, we must emphatically deny the justice of the learned doctor's criticism, and urge as our excuse the words which occur in the same play, and which might be put forward as a true key to human nature, "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together; our natures would be proud if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues."

J. W. AITKEN.

A FRAGMENT.

Must all whom beauty blesses die
Before maturity?
Must all whom love caresses lie
In drear obscurity?
That o'er thy lovely tresses I
Tired of life's wildernesses, sigh
For thy blest purity?

WILLIAM INGLIS.

FORGOTTEN.

OUT-SHOOTING from its winter trance,
A flower looks up to leaden skies,
Though pierced by many an icy lance,
To greet its sun-love's golden glance.
In vain: with drooping head it sighs—
"Forgotten."

My winged thoughts o'er-shoot the brink
 Of absence: dear, does love decay?
 No thought you send me caged in ink,
 And love seems but a broken link
 To one whose drooping heart must say—
 “Forgotten.”

ALEXIS N. REVERDEN.

A PAINTING.

SHE stood where light and shadows met;
 Upraised her noble head;
 Pale, worn her face, firm clasped her hand;
 And these were the words she said:—
 “Break, break oh heart!
 I have been tender, fond and true,
 Have dared to think and dared to do—
 Nothing for self—all, all for you:
 Break, break oh heart!”

Just then a wild bird sweetly sang,
 A bright cloud sailed above,
 A zephyr round her softly strayed,
 And whispered “God is Love.”

S. A.

THE MYRTLE AND THE BIRD.

Nor much—and yet a charm on either hand—
 Nor quite forlorn is he to whom belong
 The riches of a green leaf and a song.
 And while the beauty of the leaf is scanned,
 There comes a voice I love and understand;
 To me and to the myrtle come that throng
 Of liquid cadences so soft and strong;
 And then between the two entranced I stand.

Though sometimes scared by fancies that appal,
 And not untouched at times by gloom or grief,
 Yet morn brings balm whereof fresh light is chief;
 From lightened spirits sable shadows fall,
 And hope and sunshine come at the sweet call
 Of a bird's song, and sight of a green leaf.

J. W. DALBY.

CHRISTMAS.

In with the log ;
 Out with the fog,
 Down with the kettle, and up with the grog,
 Pull up your chairs in a ring round the fire,
 While the yule burns,
 We will make winter a joy to desire ;
 And a love summer, till summer returns.

Wide let the ring
 Grow while we sing ;
 Mirth is our motto ; and kindness our king ;
 Swift from his presence sad sorrow shall run,
 As the fair snow
 Flies from the hills, looking up to the sun ;
 Down to its doom in the valleys below.

Over the white
 World in the night,
 What is it coming along in the light,
 Streaming from stars looking down from the grand
 Heavens above ?
 Spirits of evil, away from the land !
 It is the beautiful spirit of love.

Warble ye sweet
 Bells ; gladly greet
 From the grey steeple ; all in the street,
 Far from your silver ribs ; fling the news out
 Merrie and clear.
 Tell us the spirit of Christ is about ;
 Say to the people King Christmas is here.

Welcome him man ;
 All that ye can,
 Honor the time when his coming began ;
 Make him a bower of evergreens gay ;
 Be ye astir ;
 Blossom your homes like a dingle in May ;
 Hang up the mistletoe, holly and fir.

Ye that have got
 Thoughts ; which are not
 Kind to your neighbour, in castle, or cot,
 Out of your heart in humanity's name
 Let them expire,
 Cast them to death in the soul-warming flame
 Give them to love ; by this blessed bonfire.

Open the door
 Wide to the poor,
 Give them a share if thy mercies are more ;
 Brighten their hopes by this warm sunny bank ;
 Help them to live.
 Christ among men was of poverty's rank ;
 If we have wealth, they have wrongs to forgive.

Wake up the fire,
 Make it leap higher,
 Keep the King's birthday, strike up the lyre.

JOHN GREGORY.

SAPPHO: A THRENODY.

*“Sic, ubi fata vocant, udis abjectus in herbis,
 Ad vada Mæandri concinit albus olor.”*—OVID.

“I PAUSE in my wearisome search : pause in it only to die—
 Die, with life's longings unanswered, time foiled in my anxious
 quest,
 Pass to the world—if there be a world waiting—beyond the sky,
 With my burning fiery thoughts deep-hid in my agonised breast.

I have failed to solve life's riddle. Not mine the ambitious hope
 To read in yon glittering azure the secrets of heaven above ;
 The problem I leave unanswered which had but an earthly scope,
 I sought to unravel the deep arcana of human love.

I had heard the name bestowed, where I knew that the thing was
 not,

I saw the beautiful thing, where its title was quite denied :—
 I have seen a cold pale ghost standing bodiless on the spot
 Where once stood a living love that had long since withered
 and died.

I have seen the matron and maid, with cold and lustreless eyes,
 Bound to a lord or lover, by stroke of a miserly pen,
 I have heard them swear, till they half believed their impious lies,
 We be passionless gods in flesh, not panting women and men !

I have seen, on the other side, both matron, and man, and maid
 Live, from deliberate choice, the life not of man but of beast ;
 Living for lust, as the vilest craftsman will live for his trade.

And merging existence in one long impure orgie and feast,
 I have missed the fair conjunction—the passion that flavours love,
 And love that hallows passion, as the sun's beams blazon his heat :
 That fair conjunction I go on my lone long way to prove
 If it anywhere have in the wide expanse of space its seat.

Somewhere, I still believe, that such love as I seek hath a place,
 Tho' here, in this cold gross world, it hath quite escaped from
 my ken :

So I go to seek it throughout the star-studded fields of space,
 The love, not of gods nor of beasts, but of burning women and men.

Love which, inborn in the spirit, still quickens the else dead flesh,
 Into all its prodigal life, its exquisite hopes and fears,
 And shaping itself each hour in creations both new and fresh,
 As mirth will find vent in laughter, or anguish outburst in tears.

Somewhere, perchance, beyond where the red sun is kissing the
 waves,

There may be such a Land of Life, such a Love's own Island blest,
 So I go, in that crimsoned tide, my hot beating brow to lave,
 To lay on that heaving bosom my passionate throbbing breast—

Then one mad, long leap from the high Leucadian Rock to the sea !
 One wavelet the more to kiss the sands of that dark ocean shore !
 And that passionate soul had thrilled in death's deep dark ecstacy,
 And that beating heart shall dread earth's charming illusions no
 more !

FOR PRESENT YEARS.

BETWEEN the highest light of heaven
 And darkness of the earth below,
 Between the crystal flakes down driven
 And hard black crust of trodden snow.
 Between the petals of the flower
 And ripe red blossom of the core,
 Between the past and present hour,
 Between the distance and the shore

Between the dawn of man's desire
 And all the pleasure man may find,
 Between the birth of mortal fire,
 And all the blackened ash behind ;
 Between the pulses of a kiss
 And all the vacant breath beneath ;
 Within such time and space as this,
 We snatch our joys mid life and death.

And men with blinded eyes do seek,
 And never find and never reap
 The lasting joys that never break,
 That make the heart-blood boil and leap ;
 For on this saddened earth of ours,
 We have a day wherein to die,
 And life has few and fading flowers,
 That perish when the night is nigh.

These languish in the summer shade,
 Die as they dawned and are not missed ;
 The sun beneath whose light they fade,
 Whose beams their laughing liplets kissed,

Recks not their dying or their death;
 These be our only flowers, O God,
 And each bows down and perisheth,
 Beneath the frowning of thy rod.

We only ask for present years,
 A little measure of thy joy,
 Content you with our bitter tears,
 Give gold to mingle with alloy;
 We have no hope for purer air
 Than this foul stagnant sea of breath,
 We only ask—we only dare,
 To hope for, pray for, sleep and death.

We would forget the whole black world,
 Its loathsome life, its lies untold,
 And by no hope of Heaven invited,
 Dream not that we be bought or sold:
 Around our memories we would draw
 A cloud to hide the sorrows past,
 To veil the all we loved and saw,
 The shadows by the future cast.

Ah God! if life so darksome be,
 If night be black and light be dim,
 Can we revere thy mystery,
 Sing with thy saints and seraphim?
 If life so sad to men be given,
 So sown with tares and white with rime,
 How can we hold a hope in Heaven,
 Or look for peace in other time?

We cannot see the long arcade
 That deepens to the rising sun,
 The flowers that never fall or fade,
 The years nor finished nor begun;
 Or truth, or love—and thou, O God,
 Thou seest we know nought of hope,
 Save as a flower beneath the clod,
 Whose petals neither bud nor ope.

Though we be blind to thee and thine,
 Though light be darkness to our sight,
 Though death seems but a single line,
 Passing between our day and night,
 We fain would think that after-time
 Shall shake the ages to their base,
 From clime to clime an echoing chime
 Shall summon every land and race :

The people shall arise again,
 From out the darkness of the grave,
 The sloth that in mankind hath lain,
 Shall be the corpse the grave shall have ;
 Man with his hand shall cast aside
 The cerecloths that have bound his head ;
 When man arises, woe betide
 To those who placed him with the dead.

Mankind shall raise his heaven, and place
 Upon his brow the diadem,
 The universal head to grace ;
 And kings, who sang his requiem,
 Shall turn to thrones but dross and dust,
 Their sceptres wrought to sword and share,
 Their regal robes cast off, and thrust
 Into the grave, where nations were.

ACROSTIC.*

(DEDICATED TO THE EDITOR OF THE "POETS' MAGAZINE.")

Lovers of the lyric muse!
Light or grave the theme ye choose—
Oft genius may reject your lay—
Ye bards who poet's song would sing,
 "Drink deep of the Pierian spring!"

F. P.

* See page 250.

VAGRANT FANCIES.

OFT do my fervid fancies wing
 Their course thro' intervening years,
 To find the flower-enmargéd spring,
 Whence memory draws her sweetest tears.

By worldly cravings unbeguil'd,
 I lose all sense of mortal cares ;
 Again I seem to be a child,
 And life its brightest aspect wears.

Thus, for a space, with spirit glad
 I revel in fond scenes of yore ;
 But phantoms rise, and leave me sad—
 For those I loved are now no more.

Yet from such bitters I'll distil
 The sweets that give life greater zest ;
 For gen'rous hope my cup shall fill,
 And I shall quaff her wine of rest.

H. ECCLESTON.

EARTH'S IMPERFECTION.

IN the thrilling strains of music,
 In the poet's flowing rhyme,
 Still there seemeth something wanting,
 Something greater, more sublime.

Things, however pure and lovely,
 Never reach perfection here :
 But are sent to urge us onward,
 Upward to a higher sphere.

And those longings that possess us,
 For the good and for the great,
 Are the strivings of the spirit,
 For a purer, better state.

All the light on earth that shineth,
 Is but Heaven's reflected ray ;
 For the perfect love and knowledge,
 We must wait God's perfect day.

B. G. AMBLER.

24 -2

FAR AWAY IN DISTANT RHINELAND.

Words and Music by T. J. ENGLISH.

Moderato.

PIANO.

Far a-way in dis-tant

rall.

mf
con espress.

Rhine-land, Dwells the heart I love so dear; There my

thoughts in each stray moment Fond-ly wan-der to her

FAR AWAY IN DISTANT RHINELAND.

near; Ev'-ry wish my heart can ut - ter, For the
 joy of her I love, Floats a-way on soft - est
 bree - zes, Gui - ded safe by Heav'n a - bove! Floats a -
 way on soft - est bree-zes, Gui-ded safe by Heav'n a - bove!

FAR AWAY IN DISTANT RHINELAND.

lento.
 dim. e rall.
 vivace.
 And how ea - ger - ly I watch for Ev - 'ry
 an - swer to my thoughts; Ev - 'ry in - stant I am
 list'n-ing To the sigh - ing wind's re - ports; For I

FAR AWAY IN DISTANT RHINELAND.

fan - cy in its sigh - ing Her lov'd voice must sure - ly
 f pp rall.
 staccato il basso.

be, Answer-ing, "Dear one, though we're part - ed, Still I
 a tempo.

will be true to thee." Answer - ing, "Dear one, though we're
 p

part - ed, Still I will be true to thee!"
 f

lento. dim. e rall.

REVIEWS.

"Falkland," by Sidney Smith. (Turner, Mansion House).—This play is founded on events in the stirring times of our Civil War. Many mighty men are grouped around Lord Falkland, and the history of the time is drawn in telling dramatic form. The author has put most of the finest fruit of his pen into the lips of Lord and Lady Falkland, who side with the King, but deeply regret his folly and the war which it breeds. Here are some living lines—among many :—

Is it Thy dread decree
 Omnipotent! that man is born to trouble
 As sparks fly upwards? Wherefore is he born?
 Oh! canst thou not, inexorable Heaven!
 Leave me in Time's slow eddies—that the present
 And future be forgotten in the past?
 My cheerful hearth, my honest country neighbour,
 The prattle of my children, and my farm—
 The worthies, that from all the ages come
 Around us—poets with their silent music!
 Sages sedate in Wisdom, deeds heroic—
 Content unspeakable! Is this fair Eden
 No more for me for ever?

The interest is well sustained, and the drama will repay not only reading but study.

"Annie's Pantomime Dream," by Ellis J. Davis, (A. H. Moxon) is a funny fairy tale which must make the little folks laugh. Some of the verses are certainly clever. Here is a specimen :—

THE SONG OF THE SIXPENCE.

Sing a song of sixpence,
 A pocket full of tea,
 Four and twenty listeners,
 Listening to me;
 Prices now are doubled,
 Things are dear, you see,
 So a sixpence is'nt
 What it used to be.

Sing a song of sixpence,
 A pocket full of hops,
 Four and twenty blue birds,
 Eating mutton chops;
 When the chops were eaten,
 The blue birds all took wing:
 Is'nt this a stupid song
 For any one to sing.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"An Autumn Night," by G. S.—You have some talent, but you must start a new train of thought. Throw away from you all this hypochondriacal raving about the world and its unkindness, and look at things and circumstances in their best light. Leave the groans alone, for they cannot help you. As soon as you are in a more hopeful state of mind we shall be glad to hear from you again.

W. M. (Manchester.)—Many thanks. We like the verses much.

"Ellen," by C. T.—Your present effusion is pleasing in sentiment, but the versification is the worst of any you have sent us. Re-write it.

"A Resolve," by Laon, and "Break of Day," by Iona.—These poems are not without merit. Both contain some fine thoughts. If the writers continue to study the works of good authors, they may both make the world glad to listen. Iona must study the series of articles in Vol. 2 on the "Art of Composition."

"On a Forget-me-Not," by E. L.—These lines are sweet and simple, as such a song should be; but the rhymes will not pass—*thought* and *wrought* do not rhyme with *not*. Re-write and return.

"The Ivy Bower," by W. H. R.—Accepted with thanks. Glad to hear again.

"Gone," by A. C. W.—Touching verses, but not poetry. Put more thought and music in your singing.

"Annie," by M. T.—We think these lines are an improvement on former contributions. At the same time the effusion contains several weak lines. The three first are the best:—

This flower of May was snatched away,
The rose-bud of a summer day,
By subtle Death deprived of breath.

"My Prince Hal," by DAMOIS.—Thanks for your kind note. The poem now forwarded is pretty, but hardly in our style. Further, it is too long for the class of composition. We cannot, of course, insert every accepted contribution in ensuing number. Will other "surprised" or "offended" contributors take this last remark to heart.

"Friendship," by C. S. C.—This is a pleasant poem, flowing smoothly, but not fresh. The chord struck is too common. Try again, and let the strain reach us.

"Crusader's Return," by C. A. S.—Your poem is very good in many respects, but deficient in others. The last portion is considerably the better. We shall be glad of further contributions on approval.

"Bragadino."—This story is a very suitable one just now, when the dark deeds of the Turks are tearing British breasts. It should, however, have been condensed, and the rythm regulated.

"October Morning," and "The Crocus."—These verses have the rural ring so sweet in the voice of nature; still the thoughts are not new. The writer shows signs of having a mine of music, but the ore needs refining.

JANET C.—Poems very good in many points. The chief defect is want of sustained interest for general readers. Send us some shorter pieces from which to make a choice.

"A Happy Valley," by F. G. W. C.—Good, but not containing any special thought. Here are the first and last verses:—

In wild North Wales one peaceful nook
There is engraven on my mind;
The brightest page in memory's book—
No fairer scene I hope to find.
* * * * *

Some happy moments ne'er again
Recall themselves—they bloom and die—
But those I passed down there remain
A green spot in my memory.

"The Wind," etc., by H. K.—You must write more carefully. It will not do to slip pronouns in where they should not be in order to make the measure correct; a plan you have adopted in the following line:—

Mortal man *he* cannot stay thee.

You can do better than this.

"To Spring," by F. A. G. H.—A pretty poem, but too simple for print. Study the best authors, and send us again. You must subscribe if you wish us to read and criticise your MSS.

PROSE.—You think the world does not want Poetry. We fear you are of the earth, earthy. Where would the world be without the works of the mighty minds who have glorified language by fixing eternal thoughts and truths in rhythm. We would rather lose the flowers or the stars than the songs of the everlasting singers from Moses to Morris. Fancy every glorious Milton mute and inglorious—buried beneath a moultering heap with all his music in him. If your soul had eyes and ears you would want more than mere prose.

A. E. (Deal).—Your tale of war contains some touching thoughts and fine lines ; but the poem is not of sufficient interest to our readers. Send us some verses on a subject less used up.

"Whippingham Church," &c., by J. D.—Thanks for your offer. The verses are just under high water mark. Shall hope to hear from you again. We quote a verse in praise of our lamented Prince Consort, whose name will ever be honoured by his grateful countrymen:—

"The Harvest," by J. B.—A sweet little poem, but the subject has been so often written on.

"The Chiswick Bazaar."—These lines are very clever, and if the writer would touch them up and see to their feet we should be glad of them. Prizes will be awarded as soon as poems can be read carefully. Why not send address for reply?

W. H. R.—You can sing better. Ideas of "Soliloquy" not new, and lines of irregular lengths. " 'Tis time to rise and shake off linen clothes." Certainly do so, and put on the robes of poesy. Walk up the breezy Parnassus, and listening to the voices of Nature make word music for us.

C. B.—Essay on Pope Good, but not bright enough for our magazine.

"She wore a wreath of Roses," by M. F. F. F.—We are much obliged for offer of
Paraphrase, but it is not in our line.

"Alone," by A. A.—Wrong in measure. See answer to 'The Belfry Ghost' in our last number. Original songs with music would be acceptable.

"The Miser" (Skegness).—These lines are smooth and well worded, but lack thought. Besides the moral is bad. Young ladies should not run into sin, and then into the river. They had much better stay at home, praying, working, and waiting till the true wooer wanders their way.

Proverbs vi., 4 (Cheltenham.)—True and tender sentiments which with more care could be woven into a poem. It is strange that many writers do not even measure their lines. Every day proves to us the need of the articles on composition which we are preparing for next year. Poetic subjects alone suit.

"Rule Britannia."—These lines do credit to your heart, and you are right in saying:

Our Fathers oft at Freedom's call
Have fought to free the fettered slave,
And England still has mighty men
With hearts and hands the *fair* to save.

"Melancholy," by G. J.—Very dull verses. You are in a low, sad state. We advise doses of the "Poet's Magazine" to be taken monthly. These will soon drive dull care away.

"A song," by R. F. (Scotland).—Good, but hazy in meaning and expression. An article on "Lyrical Element in Scottish Character" would be suitable.

PARDO.—Thanks for your “nut to crack this Christmas.” Our teeth are not so old as you think. We have succeeded in abstracting the kernel, but leave our readers to wait till our next if they cannot crack it themselves. Here it is:—

My head lives in London, and down a deep well,
My second in Heaven will ceaselessly dwell,
My third flies along with the winds when they blow,
My fourth aye comes down with the cold silent snow,
My fifth has been found in the far Polar seas,
My sixth can be heard in the breath of each breeze,
My seventh can be seen on the ocean's wide strand,
My whole is a name rising high in the land.

"Innocence," by A. G.—The ideas in this short effusion are touching and true, but the lines are of different lengths. Not that we care so much for the frame as the picture, but even a perfect picture is better for a good frame. You, like so many others, could have done better with care. We shall help you in your work with our series of articles on the "Art of Poetry," in Vol. II.

"King Arthur," by W. E. T.—This is no mean poem, and is full of the real martial ring. The Laureate, however, has left little room for more lines on our grand King and his martial knights. We shall be glad to receive the poems mentioned.

"The Snow," by W. T.—See answer to M. F. F. F.

"Past and Present," &c., by E. E. J.—Thanks for offer of poems. They are not up to the mark, but you might do better with practice.

G. M. J.—Accepted with thanks. We shall be glad to consider you on our staff.

"The Bird's Nest," by JULIA S. B.—The thoughts in this pretty poem are true to nature, but are too simple for *The Poets'*. The sermon from the feeble fledglings in the stone crown at King's College closes with these lines:—

And when on wings grown stronger,
With work and peaceful prayer,
Earth's crowns we love no longer,
But seek a sweeter air—
Then God himself shall give us
The crown his saints shall wear.

"Treasures," by BLANCHE.—Short and sweet, but not quite up to our standard.

"A Sonnet," by J. N. C.—The sonnet is spoilt by the frequent use of the exclamation "O," otherwise it would have been acceptable.

"Sunset."—The subject is surely worn to tatters. Send us something new.

P. R.—Your writing is illegible. Purchase some copy books, and after a few weeks practice write to us again.

"Set Free," by G. M. G.—You must take more pains. Let quality, not quantity, be your aim. We can only repeat the old story, "Nothing new."

"The Battle Field," by W. F. S.—A good poem, yet not accepted; see answer to "Sunset." Thanks for your appreciative letter. Try us again.

"Burning of the Cospatrick."—Lines very unequal in merit, some good, and others altogether ridiculous. For instance:—

The Cospatrick was to New Zealand bound,
But the Crew a watery grave had found.
Macdonald was awakened by the alarm of fire;
Then he felt like Christian in the mire.
The captain ordered him forward to see what was the matter:
Then a terrible sight presented itself to the latter.

And so on *ad libitum*.

FAITH, Chiltern.—This correspondent generally starts with a good verse, and then the inspiration subsides. We will find room for "Peace" if she will kindly alter the objectionable rhyme in the last verse and send again.

E. A. K.—We are much obliged by your sympathy. Of the many poems sent we prefer "My Friend," and "Auld Langsyne." From the latter we quote a verse:—

O relic sweet and dear to me,
Those days of auld langsyne;
When life's fair dream a halo shed,
And sunny hopes were mine.

Practice makes perfect, so we shall hope to see some verses of yours in print shortly.

ACCEPTED WITH THANKS.—"Sonnet," by J. M.; "Yours ever;" "May," by B. R.; "A Dream," by C. G.

DECLINED WITH THANKS.—"Flora," by M. T.; "A Life-scene," by T. R.; "Hope;" "Culloden," B. T. (Manchester); "To Rose," by C. C.; "A Maiden Prayer;" "Meditation," by A. D.; "Sympathy;" "Shelley" by M. T.; "Sonnet," by Deila; "A Sunset Scene;" "A Tale of the Sea," by F. G.; "Milton;" "Waylaid," by R. S.; "Mine for ever;" "Victoria," by S. N.

In answer to numerous enquiries, we desire to say that all Prize Poems must be at our Publishers by the end of January. They may be signed with real name and address or *nom de plume*. Competitors must be subscribers. All amateur writers who wish us to read and write about their manuscripts must become subscribers,

as no one can give the time required to work, which is often very wearying, free: the small sum we ask by no means pays us for the time spent in the work. Stamps must be sent where reply is desired by post, and all must be willing to wait our convenience. We do not desire to skip the MSS. and reply carelessly.

The Editor presents the compliments of the season to about 200 correspondents, to whom he apologizes for not attending to their communications at once, and assures them that they shall all hear from him as soon as possible.

NOTICE.

Our next number will commence Vol. II., and we heartily thank our readers for securing success to our voyage so far. The new volume will contain many new and striking Poems by eminent and rising Poets, and critical articles on the works of Robert Buchanan, A. C. Swinburne, Mrs. Browning, H. W. Longfellow, W. C. Bryant, J. R. Lowell, Leigh Hunt, S. T. Coleridge, Robert Burns, T. Gray, Keats, Shelley, Montgomery, and others by first-class writers; also a series of six valuable papers on the art of poetical composition. We shall esteem it a favour if our friends will get their booksellers to sell our Magazine, and also where possible lend copies to reading rooms. Volume I. is now ready, price 4s., and covers for binding can be had through any Bookseller or Bookstall at 1s. each, or free by post for Twelve Stamps.

TO OUR READERS.

While the proprietors will be happy to receive contributions from unknown writers, they are—to prevent the Magazine sinking to the level of an amateur publication—making arrangements with various authors of note, who will, from time to time, furnish poems, and articles on poets and poetry. In a word, the main feature of THE POETS' MAGAZINE will be to invite all who possess literary talent to contribute to its pages.

Original contributions only are acceptable.

Each contribution must bear on the first page the sender's name and address.

Rejected MSS. cannot be returned unless post paid. Authors should keep copies of short poems.

Should a reply by letter be required, a stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed.

Prizes of one and two Guineas will be given for the two best *Stories in Verse* of about two hundred lines in each, the same sums for the two best *Articles on Poets or Poetry*, and half the same for the two best *Songs or Sonnets*.

A Special Prize of Three Guineas is offered for the best Poem on any Biblical subject from one to two hundred lines, and for the best Essay on the Poetry of the Bible. Manuscripts to be sent by January, 1877.

Authors and Correspondents are requested to apply by letter only, addressed to the Editor of THE POETS' MAGAZINE, 21, Paternoster Row, London.

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